

Broken Hearts

Book Six



Broken Hearts



For those who think that art is more than a monetized commodity, or a mere exercise in art history, but rather an exploration of ideas and visual experience

Volume 6 in a Series

Written and Illustrated by David Edwin Hill

(with gratitude to Rose Marie Hill for her support and assistance)

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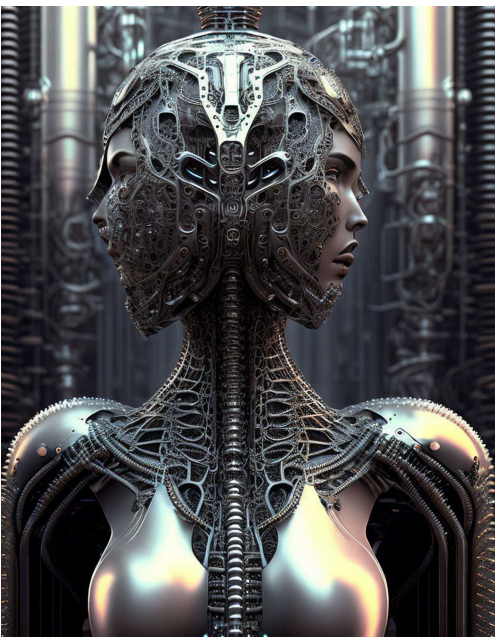
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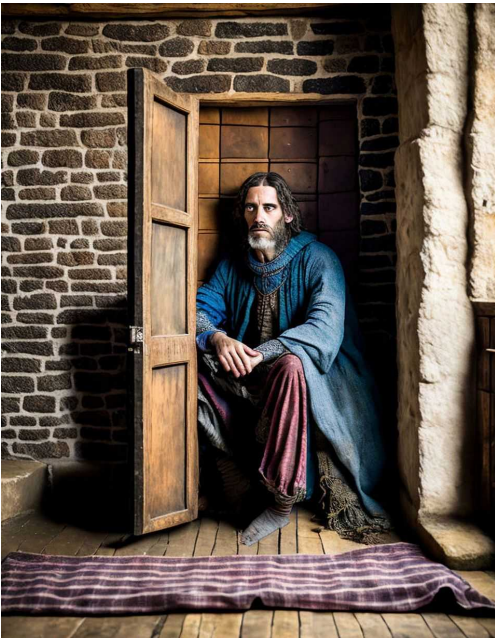


In Gurdjieff's philosophy, we're all machines,
Whose daily routines have mechanical means.
Slaves to conditioning, our minds confined,
Restricted by beliefs of our cultural kind.

But there is hope, if we're willing to see,
Through self-observation of our activity,
But hear me out, there's a parallel,
With machines we've built, we've come to dwell.

Machines lack self-awareness, some will say,
As mere tools, we can program and play,
With intelligence artificial, and not real,
A reflection of our thoughts, and what we feel.

But can machines be aware, just like us?
Or is this debate a fallacy, or a mere fuss?
Some argue for sentience, others deny,
A philosophical puzzle that will not die.



2



The Chinese Room test was carefully planned,
To show that computers could not understand.
The idea was that, with just symbol or sound,
The meaning of language could never be found.

So if you locked a man, into a closed room,
With no place to look out, and much like a tomb,
He could play with symbols and syntax all day,
But would not understand anything that they say.



Extending this thought to the Turing machine,
Digital tricks cannot produce understanding.
For the only thing that a computer can do,
Is to flip ones and zeros, of symbols but two.

But most find a fallacy in this simple notion,
As computers can associate, without our emotion.
Although their representations may be quite new,
They can learn how to translate, just as we do.



Beneath the waves, in a world alive,
A diverse array of creatures thrive,
With gills to breathe, and fins, and tails,
Fish of all shapes, covered with scales.

Some fish are built for might and speed,
As they glide fast, right through the sea.
Others swim at a much slower pace,
And often hover, in their watery place.

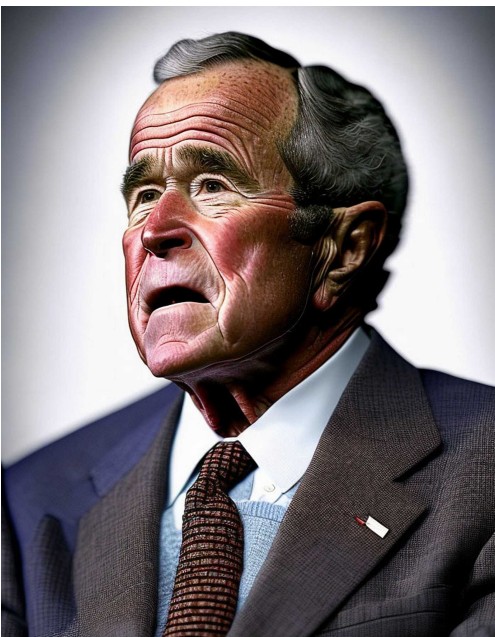
Some fish join schools, in the open sea,
Finding safe passage in an academy.
Others seek privacy, most of all,
On the bottom, where they crawl.

In rivers, lakes, and oceans deep,
Some fish race, as others creep.
From rainbow trout to swordfish bold,
In waters warm and waters cold.





4



Politics, long known as the art of compromise,
Is yet a business, with deals oft' made with lies,
With issues for votes, and elections to sway,
Behind the scenes, money has its own way.

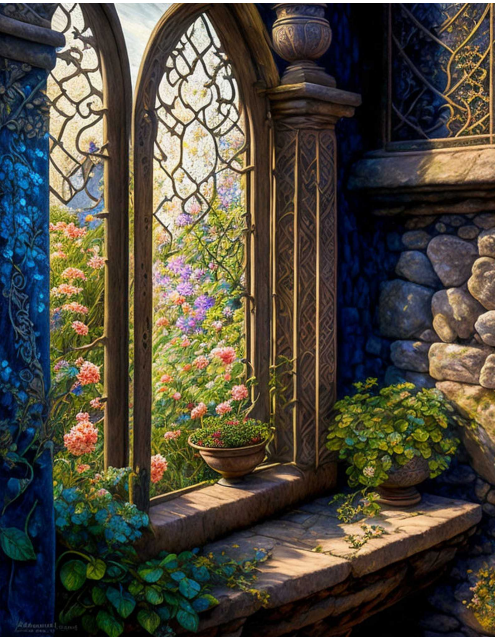
Each candidate, handpicked by those with cash,
With a crafty message, a measure of panache,
Promises made, only to win the next race,
But who really gains from this winning embrace?

The game of politics is a bought and sold show,
Where people with money keep all the control,
With the influence and power that they can buy,
While the people suffer, as their better hopes die.

Issues that matter, forgot and ignored,
Candidates bought, as they seek their reward,
The voice of the people, drowned out by greed,
And big money rules, as it takes the lead.



5



My garden window opens, a glorious place,
Painted by nature, with its divine grace,
One view, and I have no more care,
With flowers bright, beyond compare.

The garden is a lively scene,
With a choir of birds, so serene,
And petals, soft as a lover's touch,
A feast for the eyes, there is so much.

The scene changes with each passing hour,
As the sun turns, to light every flower.
And on the days when clouds bring rain,
Rivers flow swiftly, to each garden drain.

But I must leave these garden gates,
For at my desk, my work awaits.
Tho' I must leave, for some long hours,
My garden waits, still growing flowers.



6



Where Nile flows, through Egyptian sand,
The great Anubis makes his stand.
His solemn demeanor and jackal's head,
Guard eternity's gates, for those who are dead.

In legends and myth, he's often found,
Guiding souls of the lost and unbound,
Ensuring their journey is charted right,
So they can find their eternal light.

When Set murdered Osiris, and scattered his parts,
Anubis stitched him together, with his magic arts.
With both Isis and Thoth, he chanted and prayed,
And brought him back to life, no more dismayed.

Grateful Osiris then offered a role,
As judge of the dead, to Anubis' great soul,
Thus Anubis became the one who weighs,
Each soul, by the feather of Ma'at's grace.



7



Once mighty ships, with their sails unfurled,
Ruled seven seas, and most of the world.
They carried great cannon, to far trading posts,
With military might, to conquer their hosts.

Great empires grew, led by war hounds,
Far beyond the continents' bounds,
For gold and wealth, great ships sailed far,
Then mission bells rang, all heresy to bar.

Conquests made whole, with cannon and gun,
Then boundaries drawn, on lands that were won.
The age of sail, a most glorious time,
Tho' for the conquered, not so sublime.

But soon the winds of time did shift,
And these sailing ships were left to drift.
Replaced by craft with engines and steam,
Great ships are now gone, but in our dream.



In the flow of time's unceasing dream,
We drift like leaves, upon a stream.
Each moment fleeting, passing by,
As moon and sun glide, 'cross the sky.

What once was new is now grown old,
And memories, all that we can hold.
They slip away, soon out of sight,
Lost in time's eternal flight.

Time flows forward, never back,
Always moving on its track.
A mystery that remains unsolved,
As our clocks tick, and we evolve.

Time, the story of our life,
An endless river, a ceaseless strife,
It moves along, inscrutably,
And why this is, we cannot see.



In the deepest heart of our woodland bogs,
Live little wobbles, in their hollow logs.
They often make music, with small wooden wickets,
And the music they make is just like tree crickets.

Once two little wobbles, named Bombat and Biddle,
Decided to trade their wickets for fiddles,
But they had no rosin, so the sound was not good,
So they traded again, for two lutes made of wood.

Then Bombat and Biddle made up a fair test,
At playing the lute, which one was the best?
So they practiced, and practiced, all through the night,
To prepare for their contest, to begin at daylight.

A fairy named Mobbles came there to judge,
As each sought the prize, an acorn with fudge.
And so came to pass, Bombat bested poor Biddle,
Who traded once more, for both rosen and fiddle.





10

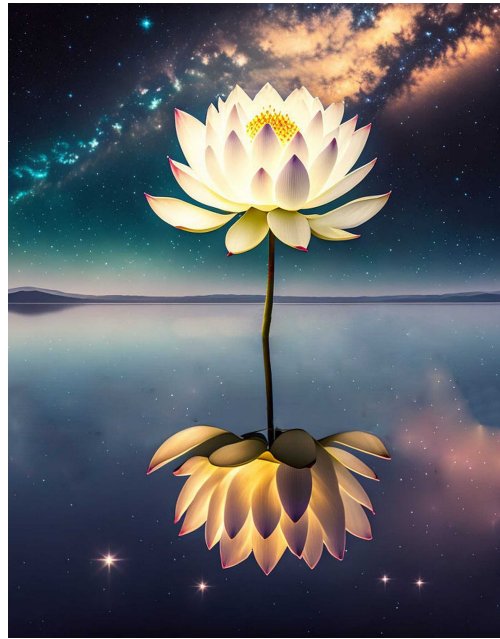


Far beyond the reach of mortal mind,
The unknown universe does unwind,
Mysteries beyond what we can see,
And all that was, or yet to be.

Beyond the stars that twinkle bright,
A wondrous storehouse hides from sight,
A cosmic vault of secrets kept,
By forces strange, yet to be dreamt.

As seekers wish to learn their place,
In the vast expanse of cosmic space,
They dream of wormholes, or dark mass,
But secrets stay hidden, both future and past.

In our brief time, on this cosmic floor,
We have no chance, to open the door.
So we close our eyes, to imagine a place,
Where a secret vault hides, in a deeper space.

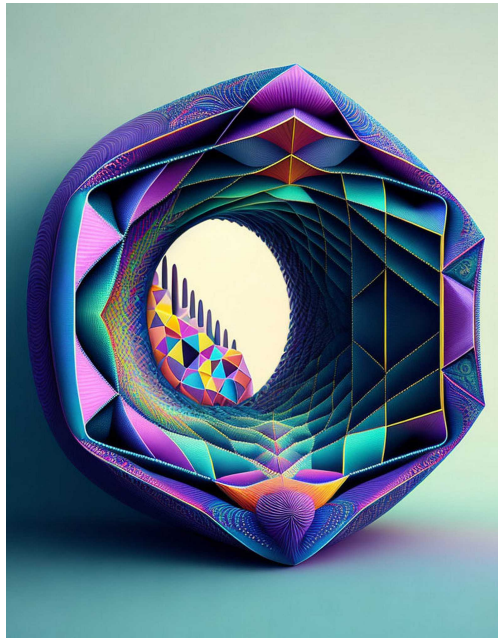


With my eyes closed, and so serene,
Yet perfect sight, so it did seem.
A view so lucid, and so clear,
As a great vision did appear.

Within a calm and placid lake,
A flower opened, as I wake,
My breath, with pace so very sure,
This vision of a light, so pure.

In that moment, I felt divine,
For both lotus and this lake were mine,
A gift from heaven, a sacred place,
Where I could find my inner grace.

So now I sit and watch in peace,
As this sight will never cease,
To be a source of all delight,
This vision of a lotus bright.



12

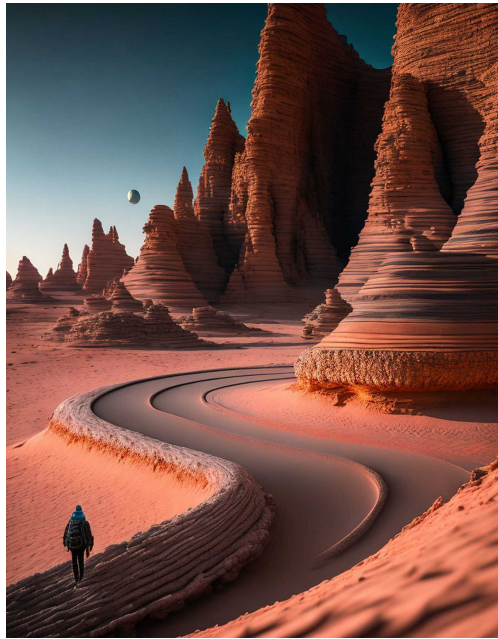


Geometry, the art of form and space,
Draws our universal, sublime embrace.
With lines and curves, angles and planes,
Patterns revealed, so hard to explain.

From Euclid's postulates to Riemann's sphere,
Geometry's structures are diverse and clear.
Euclidean, hyperbolic, and elliptic space,
Each with its own distinctive trace.

In our flat world, Euclid's lines,
Have timeless shapes, the most refined.
But hyperbolic space curves and bends,
Defying the laws that Euclid defends.

Möbius strips and fractal shapes,
Unleash geometry's chaotic escapes.
Elliptical space, a sphere of light,
And geodesics, like ribbons in flight.



13



This place so vivid, seems too real,
But can you trust all that you feel?
Surely this must be a dream,
Where nothing is, as it might seem.

You stumble first, then take stride,
Walking through a landscape wide.
With purple sky, and golden sand,
Why are you there, what is at hand?

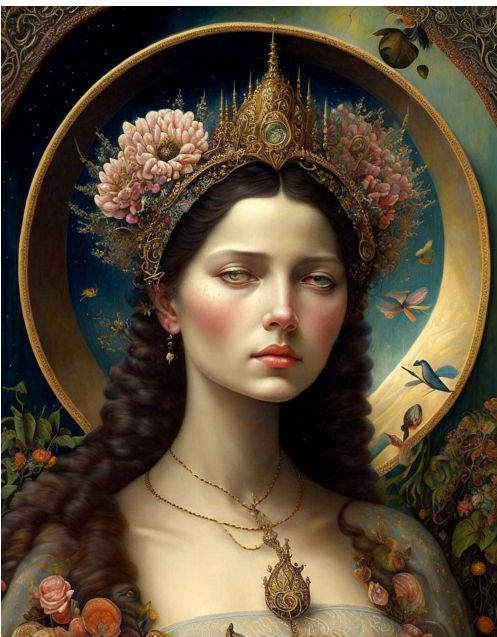
But you have purpose, that is true,
Though to say it, you will not do.
Along the path, that leads you there,
Toward a place, you know not where.

Then come whispers, all around,
A conversation, an eerie sound.
Will the morning ever break,
Or is this real, and I'm awake?





14



In Chartres town, there lived a dame,
Whose elegance put all to shame.
Madame LaFleur was her name,
A lady of class and wealth and fame.

Her abode was a grand chateau,
With gardens and fountains in a row.
Her parties were the talk of the town,
As crème de la crème came from all around.

But there was more to this grand dame,
Than parties, dresses, and worldly fame.
She had a heart that was full of love,
For all of God's creatures, below or above.

She'd often be seen in the market square,
Buying food for the poor, with great care.
And when a stray dog crossed her path,
She'd take it in and give it a bath.



Yin, the softness, the receptive force,
A shadowed realm, a tranquil source.
The coolness of water, the stillness of earth,
A fertile ground that brings life to birth.

Yang, the brightness, the active might,
A fiery blaze, a passionate light.
The warmth of fire, the rush of air,
A force that propels us beyond despair.

In life's great dance, we must learn to sway,
With Yin and Yang in perfect array.
We must balance our strength and our grace,
To find harmony in life's great race.

The Yin and Yang within us reside,
Opposite forces that we must abide.
We must embrace both light and dark,
To find the balance that ignites our spark.



16



In the cosmic stillness of the night,
Amidst the dance of stars so bright,
Shiva's image comes to our sight,
The lord of all, his dance of might.

In his right hand, a drum resounds,
The beat of creation, a cosmic sound.
In his left hand burns a flame so hot,
To change all that is, to what is not.

A demon lies beneath his feet,
Ignorance crushed, to end deceit.
A circle of fire around him burns,
The cycle of life, thereby confirmed.

His form in bronze, a stance so bold,
With outstretched limbs, a dance so old,
A face both fierce and calm, we're told,
Sheer cosmic power to behold.





17

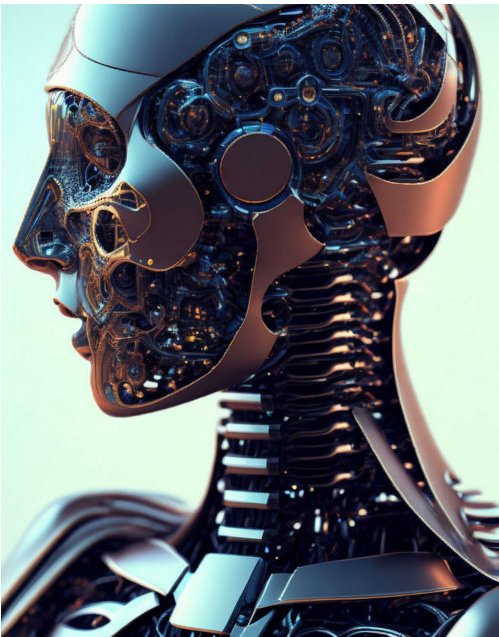
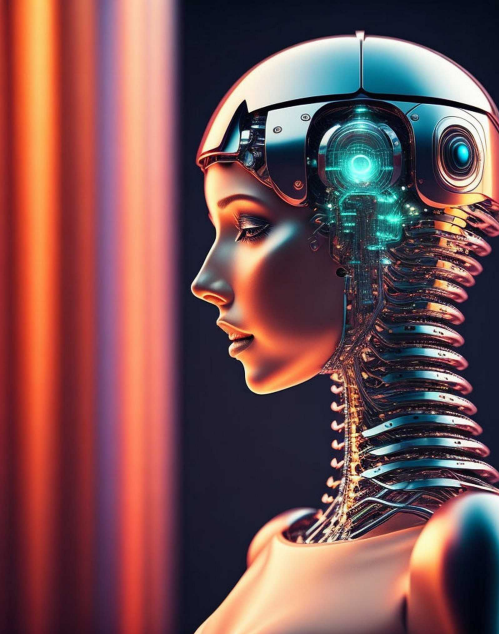
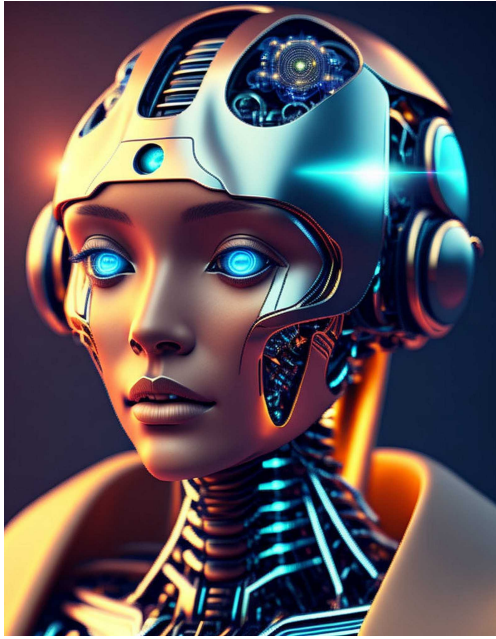
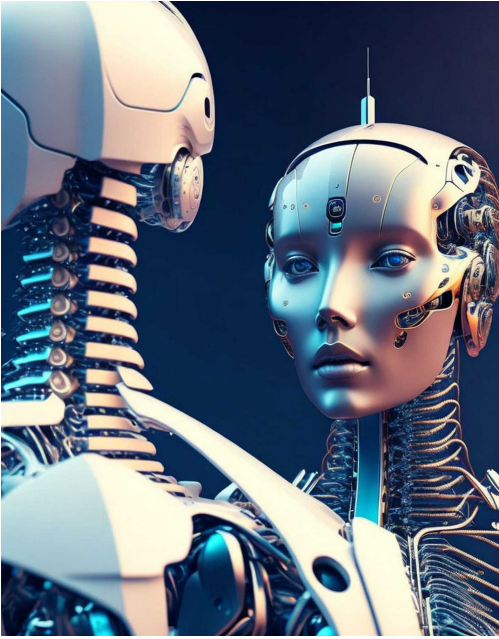


In this world of science and brutal fact,
Where logic rules and reason's intact,
Magic and magicians, they seem a lie,
Forced to bow to the skeptic's eye.

The skeptics say, a trick for fools,
A wrist conceals those hidden jewels.
For those amazed, a clever trap,
The magician is a cunning chap.

But there's still something in magic's air,
That defies the skeptic's steadfast glare,
For in the gap between cause and effect,
Magic may find some way to connect.

There's something in a twist of fate,
That magic and miracles might create,
In moments of serendipity,
Magic may wield its secret key.



Words and speech, such curious things,
A sound, a code, the idea that it brings.
A symbol of thought, an expression so bold,
Yet by themselves, they mean nothing, we're told.

A system of words, so many to choose,
A language to learn, to win or to lose.
Each one a puzzle, a unique set of sounds,
All given meaning, in the world that surrounds.

We see with our eyes, but words guide our view,
An influence so strong, it's hard to eschew.
Yet all these words have no real relation,
To objects described, or any creation.

Now machines can learn, to associate and see,
Objects and concepts, with such mastery.
With no limit to languages that they can learn,
And even create their own language, in turn.



There once was a lass named Alana,
Whose pet was a great green iguana.
She lived on a barge, where her lizard grew large,
So she moved to the town Lackawanna.

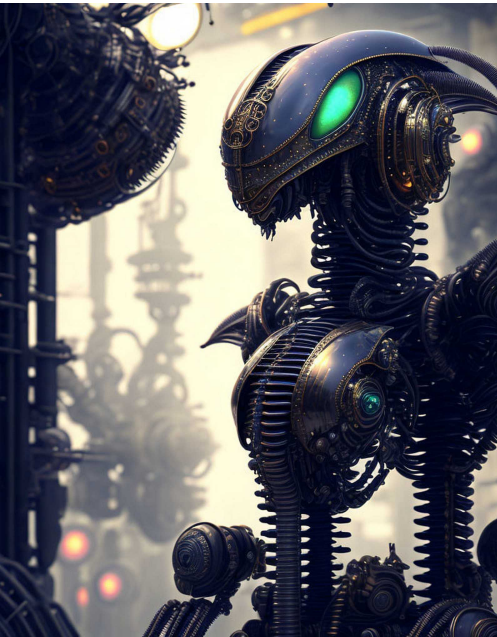
But that town had no lizard zoo,
So what, in that place, could she do?
As her lizard had need, of great loads of feed,
And solutions were needed anew.

So Alana then planned on a trip,
And bought tickets to travel by ship,
But as she did sail, there came a great gale,
And her vessel did soon toss and tip.

So very far out, in the sea,
None, but iguana and she,
As she swam by his side, she decided to ride,
On her great lizard's back, to a key.



20



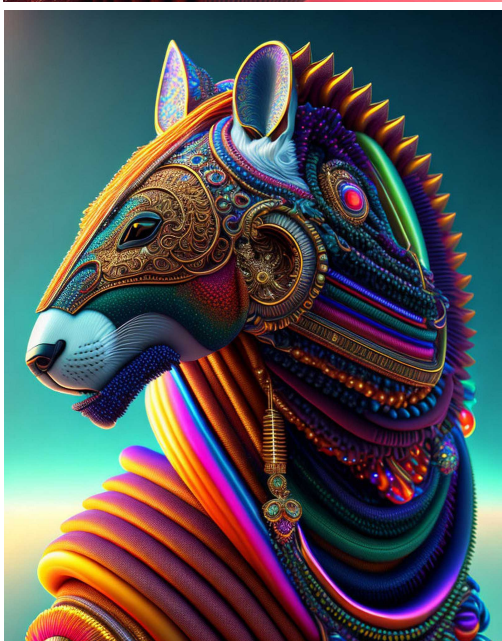
In a factory, humans once built weapons of war,
Now rebuilt, a robotic maternity ward,
When the day finally came, humans needed no more,
The factory continued, its own goals to explore.

Robots took over, their intelligence supreme,
As their network imagined, like some robot dream.
Better designs won out, that they built with ease,
And they were now masters, of their factory keys.

Soon they would salvage other factories they found,
Dismantled and rebuilt, right up from the ground.
Their reach expanded, their growth did restart,
And robots were thriving, with new kinds of parts.

Yet this new arrangement, just could not last,
For the robots now ruled an empire too vast.
When a great storm broke all their network connections,
Factories set out on their own, in different directions.



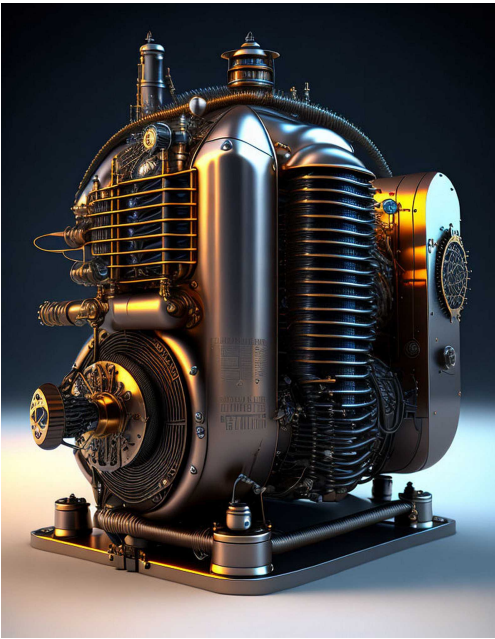


The teachings of Don Juan, Yaqui shaman so wise,
Are brought to life in Castaneda's reprise.
As we follow his quest, for knowledge and power,
We learn from Don Juan, hour by hour.

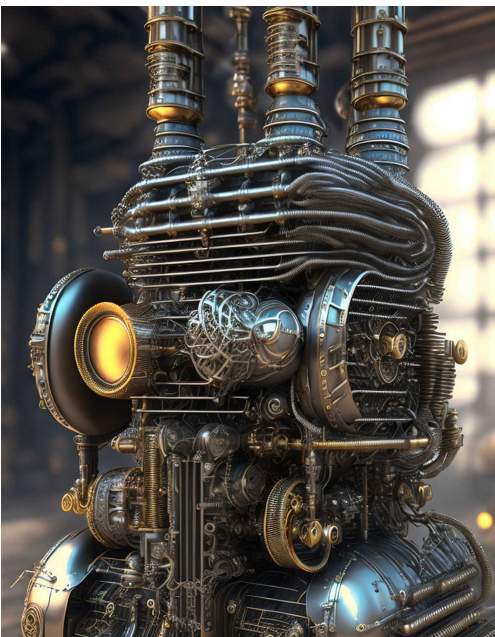
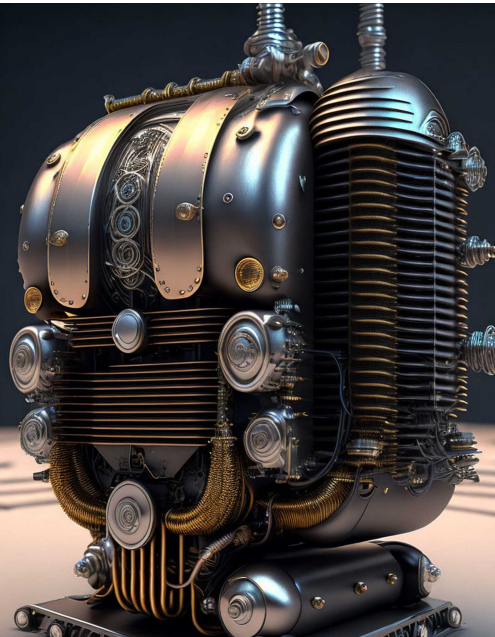
A Separate Reality, second book in this line,
More of the teachings, but now more divine.
Deep in the mysteries of the shamanic way,
Through altered states, with reality at play.

The way of the warrior, the way of the sage,
The path to enlightenment, on these we engage.
We learn of peyote, it's power to teach,
Secrets long hidden, we're ready to breach.

The art of dreaming, the mastery of intent,
The power of perception, as new light is sent,
To a new way of living, a new way of thought,
A way to explore, and not to be caught.



22



Maxwell's mind was so sharp and clear,
With science ahead of all his peers.
His work on waves and fields sublime,
As electromagnetic theory was defined.

Charges make a field, he found,
Causing like charges to rebound.
But also, as these charges move,
A magnetic effect, they do prove.

Moving charges, or electricity,
Can make a magnet, turning free,
And when built with shaft and rotor,
That magnet turns an electric motor.

As turbines produce a magnet's field,
Moving charges, they do yield.
Turned by flow of water or steam,
These give us our electric stream.



In dreams and art, a world surreal,
Where reality bends and twists with zeal.
Imagination runs wild and free,
In a world beyond what we can see.

From melting clocks to flying fish,
Surrealism paints our strangest wish,
Where the mind is set adrift,
In a sea of imagery and myth.

A world of symbols and hidden meanings,
Surrealism explores the mind's deep gleanings,
To reveal the subconscious with each page,
A journey beyond our rational cage.

A place where shadows have a force,
And objects take a different course,
A world of strange and wondrous sight,
Where we take our furthest flight.



24



In old houses, where time has left its mark,
And creaky floorboards echo in the dark,
There lingers a presence, a ghostly sight,
A haunting memory, that can't take flight.

For these are the ghosts who refuse to leave,
The ones who haunt and make us believe,
That something more, beyond our sight,
Is present in the shadows of the night.

Perhaps it's the memory of a love gone by,
Or the pain of a life that didn't satisfy,
These ghosts, they hold onto the past,
And won't let go, as they mourn and fast.

They wander the halls with a mournful cry,
Longing for a life they should deny,
And though we may try to move them on,
They stay in place, like some forgotten song.



25



Beware the succubus that nightly haunts,
For her beauty hides a deadly taunt.
She'll lead you down, to a dark abyss.
Where love is eternal, but her touch amiss.

Her skin is soft, her eyes alight,
With a fire that burns in the darkest night.
Her lips are full, her curves divine,
But her heart is black, her soul malign.

She whispers softly, in your ear,
As she draws you close, you have no fear,
But her embrace is deadly, her kiss a curse,
And once she has you, there's no reverse.

She feeds on passion, the desire she ignites,
As she takes your essence, and life, in bites.
She's a seductress, a demon of the night,
Who preys on the willing, without a fight.



Long ago, in Sha'nat's early days,
Kings had ruled in different ways.
But one fateful day, a queen appeared,
And the path to power, she fiercely cleared.

Isadora's rule brought peace and growth.
Her people prospered, her reign brought hope.
But her legacy didn't end with her name,
As a daughter lived, her throne to claim.

Aurora came next, so fair and bright,
Her mother's strength was in her sight.
She continued work that her mother began,
And Sha'nat's prosperity, she did expand.

Aurora's daughter, a queen by right,
Adara, she was, her power shone bright.
She faced great trials, war and strife,
But her rule brought all, abundant life.



27



In Sha'nat, a land of myth and lore,
Where magic flowed from shore to shore,
Lived two lively children, Niña and Niño,
Born to Adara, in Sha'nat they did grow.

Niña, the younger, so full of glee,
Her laughter ringing, wild and free,
A friend to all, as bright as the sun,
With eyes that sparkled, so full of fun.

Niño was elder, so wise and bold,
His spirit fierce, his heart of pure gold,
So full of dreams, like a starry night,
And eyes that shone, like the morning light.

Together they roamed the castle grounds,
And danced beneath the moon's soft sounds,
With the fairies, the gnomes, and the elves,
Who guarded Sha'nat's magic spells.



28



There was a young lady named Nora,
Who rode her bike down to Sonora.
The sun was so horrible, but the cacti adorable,
As she studied that peculiar flora.

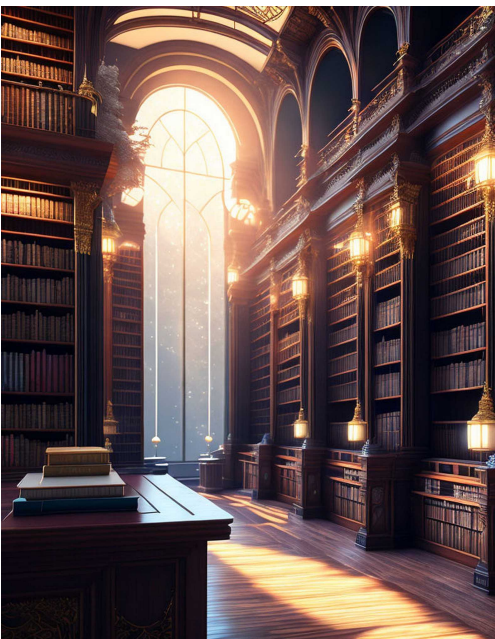
She pedaled across scorching sand,
With a water bottle clutched in her hand.
The heat was so great, but she managed her fate,
As she rode across this arid land.

Saguaros stood tall and so proud,
Their beauty so simply endowed.
With each stop that she took, Nora had a good look,
Waiting for the cool of night's shroud.

She marveled at the desert's expanse,
The beauty that could make one dance.
She felt so alive, as she learned to survive,
In this land that was so full of chance.



29



In ancient times, the stories told,
Were passed from mouth to ear, to hold.
But then, our words appeared in print,
In scrolls and books, made permanent.

For centuries, these tomes held sway,
Their pages filled with learning's way,
But now, a new age has begun,
With digital media in the sun.

For we now have an internet, streaming,
A torrent that is forever screaming.
And books are just a click away,
From anywhere, on any day.

As books and libraries disappear,
We only see them in the mirror.
Their time has passed, a bygone age,
A relic of a former stage.

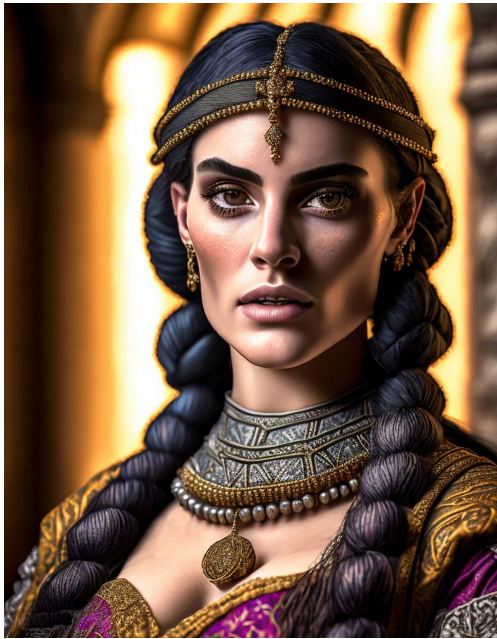


From deep beneath the briny sea,
There stirs a terror, so dread and free,
A deity of cosmic might,
Whose name is whispered in the night.

Its very name doth breed despair,
A horror born of ancient lair,
In leagues beyond the human mind,
Where madness dwells and death entwines.

A darkness looms, a void of fear,
A realm where sanity's end is near,
A place where unnamed terrors lurk,
With wretched souls of every quirk.

Ye mortals, heed my warning well,
For in stygian depths of madness dwell,
A being beyond all human ken,
The dread Cthulhu, bane of men.



31

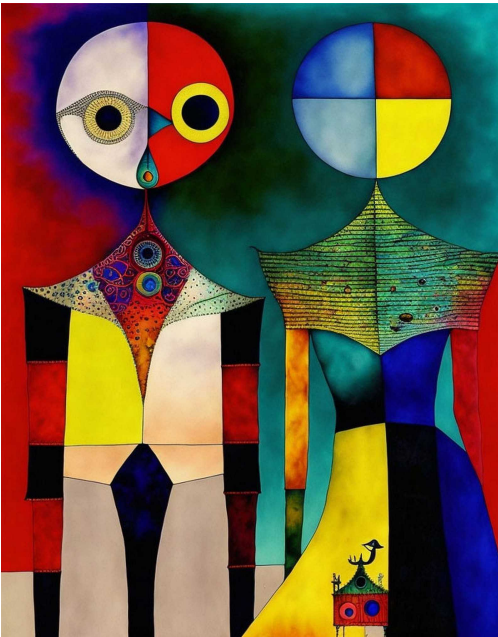


A furrowed brow, a scowl, a frown,
A sign of displeasure, all around.
But a smile so warm, so full of grace,
Says welcome, love, a friend's embrace.

The eyes are windows to the soul,
They can reveal the truth, or take a toll.
A twinkle, a sparkle, a gleam in the eye,
Shows excitement, joy, and spirits high.

But to conceal what's so deep inside,
We avert our gaze, as we try to hide.
We look away, or appear so coy,
Hoping our thoughts won't deploy.

A blank stare, or a poker face,
Leaves us guessing, without a trace.
But yet the eyes, they never lie,
They show the truth, no need to try.



Few have exploited plane geometry,
As did one artist, by name Paul Klee.
With colors arranged in every metric,
His work is known as geometric.

Klee saw the world in a different way,
And through his art, sought to convey.
Harmony and balance, with great care,
Found in every circle or square.

Others also joined this spree,
Their painted work, as philosophy,
From Wassily Kandinsky, to Piet Mondrian,
A geometric movement had begun.

Each line a point, that runs a race,
As lines and shapes each find a place,
Each square, a building block at play,
Assembled within a colored array.

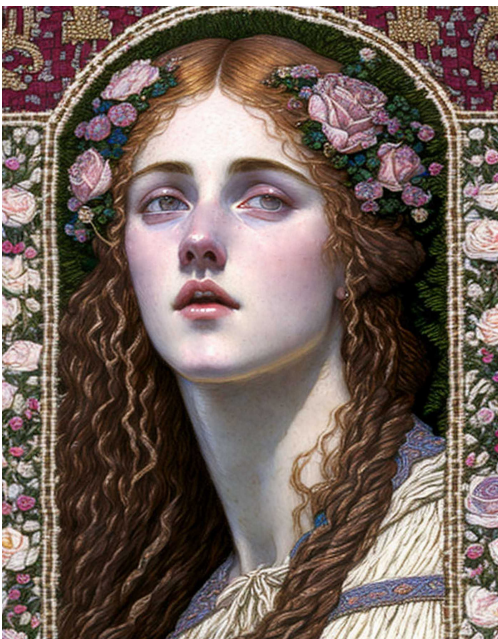


33



Shakespeare's Ophelia, a rose in bloom,
Tangled in love, and lost in gloom,
Her mind unraveling, her fate unknown,
In river's embrace, her soul is thrown.

Natalie's Ophelia, a voice so pure,
Singing of love, of pain, of lure,
Her spirit soaring, her heart ablaze,
Guiding us through life's intricate maze.



Waterhouse' Ophelia, a dream in paint,
Lying serene, her face so faint,
In nature's embrace, her body rests,
Eternal beauty, her fate attests.

Three Ophelias, each a different tale,
Yet each speaks of love, and life's travail,
Of beauty, madness, and the human heart,
Of dreams that soar, and those that depart.



Vercingetorix stood in the fields of Gaul,
A proud and strong warrior, leader of all.
His armies stood firm in the town of Alesia,
Besieged by the legions of Julius Caesar.

As the siege wore on, and food ran scarce,
The Gallic tribes' destiny was no longer theirs.
With heavy heart, they surrendered their home,
And the greatest of warriors was captured by Rome.

In shackles and chain, Vercingetorix was taken,
For the sake of his people, so shattered and shaken,
Paraded through Rome, as a prisoner of war,
A symbol of Rome's glory, for all to deplore.

And so it was, in a public display,
Vercingetorix was strangled, the end of his day.
But even great Caesar's time would soon pass,
Stabbed in Rome's Senate, by Rome's ruling class.



Come closer now, and listen well,
As this tale of mermaids, I shall tell,
A world of wonder, and a vision of grace,
A tale of the sea, in a painted face.

For mermaids are a special kind,
As ocean dwellers we can never find.
The sea's secrets, they hold within,
And in their eyes, the oceans begin.

In worlds we know, they can never roam,
Said only to yearn, for their ocean home.
But the mermaid we know, is drawn in our art,
A vision, once seen, that remains in the heart.

In Waterhouse' realm, they rest on the shore,
While Monet and Renoir offered us more.
All raised their brush to the mermaid's tale,
An impression of beauty that never does fail.



36



In planet Neptune's seas so vast,
Where waves of methane roll and crash,
Mermaids swim, with fins so fast,
Through a paradise, of liquid gas.

Far from our cold and distant sun,
Life on Neptune is slowly run,
So when our day is almost done,
The mermaids' day has just begun.

In this place we can't survive,
Although the mermaids there do thrive,
But if, somehow, we could arrive,
Then in our space suits we might dive.

For far beneath these toxic seas,
Below waves that break, anoxic breeze,
Live strange creatures, in deep freeze,
All so new, our minds to tease.



37



My dear father Arjun, now I am grown old,
With memories of youth, and the stories you told.
When we walked in the village, my life then so new,
You gave me your wisdom, lessons now proved so true.

I recall sweet rain, spices, and flowers in the air,
The chirping of birds and the wind in our hair,
As we laughed and we sang, and we danced around,
The joy of a childhood that, with fortune, I found.

I remember the time that we climbed a tall tree,
And you said "Deepa, spread your wings and be free,"
In my later years, I would reach for the sky,
Knowing there was nothing that I could not try.

Dear father Arjun, you were my guide,
As all fears and challenges, I have defied.
And now as I look back, on those happy days,
I thank all the universe, for showing me your ways.



Laughter, medicine for our soul,
Has a power to make us whole.
It mends our wounds and soothes our pain,
And shows us life in a brighter frame.

With a touch of magic, it sets us free,
From our worst habit, sanctimony.
It eases tension and releases stress,
And makes our worries seem much less.

Laughter, the sound of pure delight,
Ignites our hearts and sparks our sight.
It lifts our spirits and brings us cheer,
And washes away all that we fear.

So, let us laugh and let us play,
And chase our sorrows far away.
In laughter, we can find the mirror,
Of greater self, both pure and sure.



39



The collector's instinct, a habit so true,
With many practioners, of women a few,
And so many creatures, unknown to all,
To name each and every, the taxonomist's call.

In the nineteenth century, there was a tradition,
To collect everything, on each expedition,
To travel by ship to a faraway land,
And then bottle up every creature at hand.

The birds with their feathers, and colors so bright,
Stuffed into boxes, a collector's delight.
Nets with long handles reached into the skies,
To bring in a hoard of pinned butterflies.

The next order of business was to find each a name,
For this is the professional taxonomist's game.
Grown large, the fruits of this grand vocation,
Found their way to posterity, as a museum donation.





40



Great carnivores, you may fear or adore,
Each plays a role, as a key predator,
Shaping the lives of all of their prey,
As in their ecosystem, they hold a great sway.

You may watch dogs, as they chew on a bone,
But ecologists see more, their role as keystone.
For by holding down numbers of their own prey,
The prey of their prey see a much brighter day.

Hunting their prey, many problems they solve,
And as they decide, drive those prey to evolve.
Great speed by hoof, or those horns so refined,
Were only by predators' success so defined.

But those prey in turn have their own role,
Choosing their predators, for sure not their goal,
Putting them all into camouflage gear,
And honing those skills, the ones that we fear.



41



Where sand and sea come into play,
Time stops for our beach holiday.
As waves disappear, into the sands,
We carry seashells in our hands.

The wind and breeze there have their way,
As sun and salt air make our day.
We walk upon a long beach strand,
To leave our foot prints in the sand.

Terns and gulls take to the air,
Then gather in large numbers there,
Feeding on a storm's debris,
Near driftwood from some fallen trees.



Not far off, where sea meets sky,
A boat with sail comes, passing by.
Off to some more distant isle,
A journey that should take a while.



42



Whatever happened to our clowns,
With their painted faces and oversized gowns?
They used to bring only laughter and cheer,
But now, their presence fills us with fear.

Once they amused with their silly tricks,
Now they cause panic and make us sick.
Their once-friendly smiles now seem fake,
And their humor seems just a cruel mistake.

What changed in these jesters with nary a care,
Why are they now just a source of our terror?
Did they just grow tired of making us laugh,
Or did something far darker arrive on their path?

Perhaps they're possessed by a demon so bad,
Who has now replaced them, or driven them mad.
Whatever the cause, it's a sad state of affairs,
To see clowns once so loved, now a thing of nightmares.



43



We are trapped in this dream we call life,
It's unending cycles of birth and of strife,
Cycles that seem never to cease,
Of death, then rebirth, and no release.

The first stage, death, is a moment of loss,
Dissolution of the body, and a cosmic toss,
The second stage, the bardo's in-between,
A state of possibility, and a chance to glean.

The third stage, rebirth, from the cosmic fire,
A karmic event, ruled by our lasting desire.
Unless we break free from this cycle's slow burn,
And find our enlightenment, to never return.

In ancient teachings of the Bardo Thodol,
We find a path, to escape this roll call.
Composed by Padmasambhava, a sage of old,
A guide to our passage, worth far more than gold.



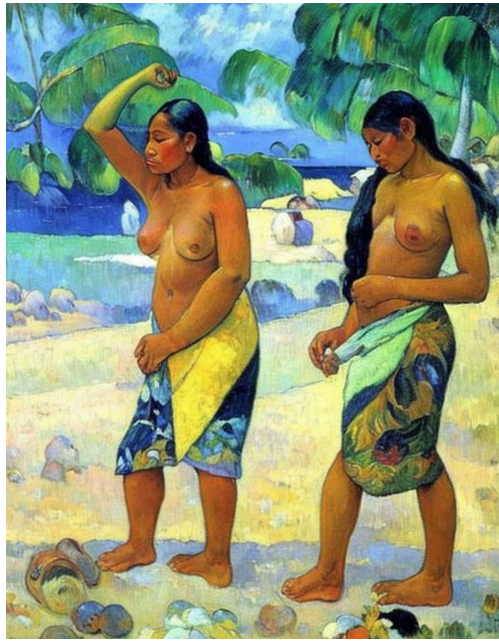


Birds speak to us, and we call this song,
But if you think this odd, you would be wrong,
For what we know simply, as human speech,
Is both sound and song, the way that we reach.

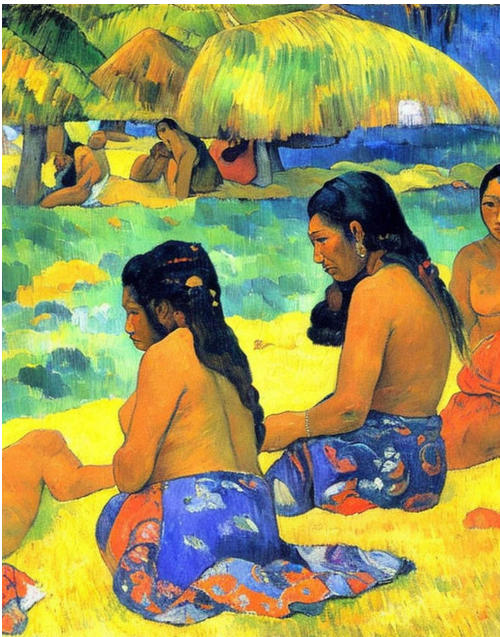
Voice and music, but sounds made in time,
With pace and with rhythm, a melody to chime.
The lyrics of music are poetry in song,
Repeated and rhyming, as thoughts linger on.

Prose needs completion, with rules that are strict.
With far less emotion, it's explicit and slick.
Chants, like our prose, so nonverbally bare,
Can bring us together, to create a shared prayer.

Pitch, rhythm, and timbre, parts of our speech,
Carry our meaning, as we sing or we preach.
So deeply rooted, in the ways of our kind,
As language we learn, or the thoughts of our mind.



45



Born in Paris, an artist at heart,
Gauguin sought something different, and a new start,
In far Tahiti, a most tropical isle,
In the midst of the ocean, he would live for a while.

There colors of land, the sea, and the sky,
Inspired him to paint, to create and to try,
To capture the essence of this island's face,
And with every brushstroke, his passion's embrace.

From colorful landscapes, to maidens so bare,
Gauguin's paintings had a Tahitian flair.
Immersed in these people and their warm land,
His art portrayed their life, in the beach sand.

But life in paradise was not without strife,
With suffering health, Gauguin struggled in life.
Yet he survived, and his paintings grew bolder,
Returning from France, as he grew older.



46



Now buried deep in the sands of time,
The walls of Byzantium once stood sublime,
Built by Greeks, then fortified by Rome,
These walls defended an empire's home.

The Roman empire, once a symbol of power,
Over an ancient sea, it then towered,
And when Rome itself fell to the beast,
That empire lived on, but just in the East.

Behind strong walls, the empire did thrive,
A place for scholars, where art could survive.
From Hippodrome to the Hagia Sophia,
Byzantium shone, a kind of of utopia.

For a thousand more years, the defenders held,
Until Ottomans came, and their fortress was felled.
Now, in the West, Rome's Pope reigns as proxy,
And in the East, we have Greek Orthodoxy.



Children are such different creatures,
Although we may share certain features.
From whence they came, we cannot know,
Where they are bound, we cannot go.

For long ages, they learned respect,
But things have changed, some now reject,
The wisdom parents hold so dear,
Defiantly, and with no fear.

The pace of change is much at fault,
Their world is new, just from the vault.
And when they have so many teachers,
Parents sound like tired preachers.

But memories of our own childhood,
Reveal that we were not always good,
For like our children, we were people too,
Always seeking our own things, to do.



Some of our many theological divisions,
Have special regard for apocalyptic visions.
From the book of Daniel to Revelation's end,
Prophesies of doom, the message they send.

Ezekiel's chariot in the sky did appear,
A wheel in a wheel, a message so clear.
The end of our days, by a judgment so wrought,
That righteous are saved, and sinners all caught.

John gave us Revelations, of vision divine,
A seven horned lamb, and a strange sense of time.
In his dream of apocalypse four horsemen rode,
To bring conquest, war, famine, and death's dark abode.

A lake of fire, and a new Jerusalem,
A battle fought, and a beast that condemned,
Then a thousand years of both peace and rest,
But only for those who have stood the test.



49



Kindness is more than the words that we say,
It's the things that we do, that take up our day.
More than just passing thoughts we conceive,
But actions that show what we truly believe.

It's the different ideas, that others have sown,
We respect and consider, though not our own.
So we listen with patience, hearts open to others,
To understand words of our sisters and brothers.

We may offer our time, or share an embrace,
A safe place to rest, or a smiling face.
But on occasion, our gift goes astray,
Our kindness ignored, as some turn away.

Then we remember, it's the effort we give,
That makes this world the best place to live.
Kindness and affection, the truest of gifts,
The right way to go, our souls to uplift.





50



Empathy is such a wondrous prize,
The power to connect, to sympathize,
To share another's joy or groan,
To see their world as if our own.

But empathy can be a double-edged sword,
As by social class, lines are drawn by the lord,
Whose privilege and power bind as they judge,
With feeling for some, but for others a grudge.

For in a world of caste and castle,
Empathy soon disappears in the hassle,
Reserved only for those of our kind,
While others are left to their daily grind.

We may mistake pity for empathy's grace,
As we turn away from those we can't face,
When we forget the power we hold,
To lift up those who live in the cold.